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New York

*President:* Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

*The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 110**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/72/1)**

**The President**: In accordance with the decision taken at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017, the General Assembly will hear a presentation by the Secretary-General of his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1), under agenda item 110.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres.

**The Secretary-General**: I am here in a spirit of gratitude and humility for the trust the members of the General Assembly have placed in me to serve the world's peoples. "We the peoples" and the United Nations face grave challenges. Our world is in trouble. People are hurting and angry. They see insecurity rising, inequality growing, conflict spreading and climate changing. The global economy is increasingly integrated, but our sense of global community may be disintegrating. Societies are fragmented. Political discourse is polarized. Trust within and among countries is being driven down by those who demonize and divide. We are a world in pieces. We need to be a world at peace. I strongly believe that, together, we can build peace. We can restore trust and create a better world for all.

I will focus today on seven threats and tests that stand in our way. For each, the dangers are all too clear. Yet for each, if we act truly as united nations, we can find answers.

First, turning to the nuclear peril, the use of nuclear weapons should be unthinkable. Even the threat of their use can never be condoned. But today global anxieties about nuclear weapons are at the highest level since the end of the Cold War. The fear is not abstract. Millions of people live under a shadow of dread cast by the provocative nuclear and missile tests of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea itself, such tests do nothing to ease the plight of those who are suffering from hunger and severe violations of their human rights.

I condemn those tests unequivocally. I call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and all Member States to fully comply with Security Council resolutions. Last week's unanimous adoption of resolution 2375 (2017) tightened sanctions and sent a clear message regarding the country's international obligations. I appeal to the Council to maintain its unity. Only that unity can lead to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and, as the resolution recognizes, create an opportunity for diplomatic engagement to resolve the crisis.

When tensions rise, so does the chance of miscalculation. Fiery talk can lead to fatal misunderstandings. The solution must be political, and now is a time for statesmanship. We must not sleepwalk our way into war. More broadly, all countries must show greater commitment to the universal goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The nuclear-weapon

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States have a special responsibility to lead. Today proliferation is creating unimaginable danger, and disarmament is paralysed. There is an urgent need to prevent proliferation, to promote disarmament and to preserve the gains made in those directions. Those goals are linked: progress on one will generate progress on the other.

Secondly, let me turn to the global threat of terrorism. Nothing justifies terrorism — no cause, no grievance. Terrorism continues to cause a rising toll of death and devastation. It is destroying societies, destabilizing regions and diverting energy from more productive pursuits. National and multilateral counter-terrorism efforts have indeed disrupted networks, reclaimed territory, prevented attacks and saved lives; but we need to intensify that work. Stronger international cooperation against terrorism remains crucial.

I am grateful to the General Assembly for approving one of my first reform initiatives, that is, the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. Next year, I intend to convene the first-ever gathering of heads of counter-terrorism agencies of Member States to forge a new international counter-terrorism partnership. But it is not enough to fight terrorists on the battlefield or to deny them funds. We must do more to address the root causes of radicalization, including real and perceived injustices and high levels of unemployment and grievances among young people. Political, religious and community leaders have a duty to stand up against hatred and serve as models of tolerance and moderation. Together, we need to make full use of United Nations instruments and expend our efforts to support the survivors. But experience has also shown that harsh crackdowns and heavy-handed approaches are counterproductive. As soon as we begin believing that violations of human rights and democratic freedoms are necessary to win the fight, we might as well have lost the war.

Thirdly, concerning unresolved conflicts and systematic violations of international humanitarian law, we are all shocked by the dramatic escalation of sectarian tensions in Myanmar's Rakhine state. A vicious cycle of persecution, discrimination, radicalization and violent repression has led to more 400,000 people desperately trying to flee, thereby putting the region's stability at risk. I take note of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi's address today and her intention to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine state, which were shared by Kofi Annan, within the shortest time possible. But let me emphasize once again that the authorities in Myanmar must end military operations, allow unhindered humanitarian access and recognize the right of refugees to return in safety and dignity. I must also address the grievances of the Rohingya, whose status has been left unresolved for far too long.

No one is winning today's wars. From Syria to Yemen, from South Sudan to the Sahel, Afghanistan and elsewhere, only political solutions can bring about peace. We should have no illusions: we will not be able to eradicate terrorism if we do not resolve the conflicts that are generating the disorder in which violent extremists flourish. Last week, I announced the establishment of a high-level advisory board on mediation. The eminent members of the board will allow us to be more effective in brokering peace around the world. The United Nations is forging closer partnerships with key regional organizations, such as the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. We continue to strengthen and modernize peacekeeping, thereby protecting civilians and saving lives around the world. Since taking office, I have sought to bring together the parties to conflicts, as well as those who exercise influence over them. As a meaningful example, I am particularly hopeful with regard to tomorrow's meeting on Libya. Last month, I visited Israel and Palestine. We must not let today's stagnation in the peace process lead to tomorrow's escalation. We must restore the hope of the two peoples. The two-State solution remains the only way forward, and it must be pursued urgently.

I must nevertheless be frank. In too many cases, the warring parties believe that war is the answer. They may speak of a willingness to compromise, but their actions too often betray a thirst for outright military victory at any cost. Violations of international humanitarian law are rampant, and impunity prevails. Civilians are paying the highest price, with women and girls facing systematic violence and oppression. In my country and during my years at the United Nations, I have seen that it is possible to move from war to peace and from dictatorship to democracy. Let us push ahead with a surge in diplomacy today and a leap in conflict prevention for tomorrow.

Fourthly, climate change puts our hopes in jeopardy. Last year was the hottest ever, and the past decade has been the hottest on record. The average

global temperature continues to climb, glaciers are receding and permafrost is decreasing. Millions of people and trillions of dollars in assets are at risk from rising seas and other climate disruptions. The number of natural disasters has quadrupled since 1970. The United States, followed by China, India, the Philippines and Indonesia, have experienced the greatest number of disasters since 1995 — more than 1,600, or one every five days. I stand in solidarity with the people of the Caribbean and the United States who have just suffered through Hurricane Irma — the longest-lasting category 5 storm ever recorded — and Maria is already on its way.

We should not link any single weather event with climate change, but scientists are clear that such extreme weather is precisely what their models predict will be the new normal of a warming world. We have had to update our language to describe what is happening. We now talk of mega-hurricanes, superstorms and rain bombs. It is time to leave the path of suicidal emissions. We know enough today to act. The science is unassailable, and I urge Governments to implement the historic Paris Agreement with ever-greater ambition. I commend those cities that are setting bold targets, and welcome the initiatives of the thousands of private enterprises, including major oil and gas companies, that are betting on a clean, green future. Energy markets are telling us that green business is good business. The falling cost of renewables is one of the most encouraging stories on the planet today, as well as the growing evidence that economies can grow as emissions decrease, with new markets, more jobs and opportunities to generate trillions of dollars in economic output. The facts are clear. Solutions are staring us in the face. Leadership needs to catch up.

(*spoke in French*)

Fifthly, growing inequalities undermine the foundations of society and the social contract. The integration of the world's economies, the expansion of trade and astonishing technological advances have brought with them remarkable benefits. More people than ever before have lifted themselves out of extreme poverty. Furthermore, the world's middle class is now more numerous than ever, and more people are living longer and healthier lives. But that progress is not equally shared. We are seeing enormous disparities with regard to income, equal opportunities and access to the fruits of research and innovation. Eight men own the same share of global wealth as half of all humankind. Regions, countries and entire communities remain at a distance from the rising tide of progress and growth and are left to their own devices in the rust belts of our world. That exclusion has a price — frustration, alienation and instability — but we have a plan aimed at changing direction so as to achieve fair and just globalization. That plan is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Half of our world's population is female. Half of our world's population is under 25 years of age. We cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals without taking advantage of the power of women and building on the enormous energy of young people. We know how fast transformation can take place today. We know that, with global wealth and assets in the billions of dollars, we do not lack the funding. Let us find the wisdom to use the tools, programmes and resources already in our hands to achieve sustainable and beneficial development for all, which is not only a goal in and of itself but is also our best tool for conflict prevention.

The dark side of innovation is the sixth threat that we must face, and it has gone from the border to the front door. Technology will continue to be at the heart of shared progress, but innovation, however essential it may be for humankind, could have unforeseen consequences. Cybersecurity threats are on the increase. Cyberwar is becoming less and less a covert reality; it is increasingly able to disrupt relations between States and destroy hundreds of structures and systems of modern life. Progress in cyberspace may certainly empower people, but the so-called "dark web" shows that some people use its potential to cause harm and serve themselves. Artificial intelligence is something new that can stimulate development and dramatically improve living conditions, but it can also have a dramatic effect on labour markets, global society and even our social fabric. Genetic engineering has moved from the pages of science fiction to the marketplace, but it has spawned new, unresolved ethical dilemmas. Unless such advances are addressed in a responsible way, they could cause incalculable damage.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Governments and international organizations are simply not prepared for the new situation. Traditional forms of regulation are simply no longer valid. It is clear that such trends and capabilities require a new generation of strategic thinking, ethical reflection and regulation. The United Nations is willing to be a forum

in which Member States, civil society, companies and the academic world are able to meet and talk about the way forward, to the benefit of all.

(*spoke in English*)

Finally, I want to talk about human mobility, which I do not perceive as a threat, even if some do. I see it as a challenge that, if properly managed, can help bring the world together. Let us be clear: we do not face only a refugee crisis, we also face a crisis of solidarity. Every country has the right to control its own borders, but that must be done in a way that protects the rights of people on the move. Instead of closed doors and open hostility, we need to re-establish the integrity of the refugee-protection regime and the simple decency of human compassion. With a true global sharing of responsibility, the number of refugees that we face can be managed. However, too many States have not risen to the occasion. I commend those countries that have shown admirable hospitality to millions of forcibly displaced people. We need to do more to support them.

We also need to do more to face the challenges of migration. The truth is that the majority of migrants move in a well-ordered fashion, while making positive contributions to their host countries and homelands. It is when migrants move in unregulated ways that the risks become clear — risks for States, but most especially for migrants who are exposed to perilous journeys.

Migration has always been with us. Climate change, demographics, instability, growing inequalities and aspirations for a better life, as well as unmet needs in labour markets, mean it is here to stay. The answer is effective international cooperation in managing migration to ensure that its benefits are more widely distributed and the human rights of all concerned are properly protected. From my experience, I can assure members that most people prefer to realize their aspirations at home. We must work together. Development cooperation must be oriented in such a way that enables them to do so. Migration should be an option, not a necessity.

We also need much stronger commitment from the international community to crack down on human traffickers and to protect their victims. Let us be clear: we will not end the tragedies in the Mediterranean, the Andaman Sea or elsewhere without creating more opportunities for regular migration, which will benefit migrants and countries alike.

I myself am a migrant, as are many people in this Hall. And yet no one expected me to risk my life on a leaky boat or cross a desert in the back of a truck to find employment outside my country of birth. Safe migration cannot be limited to the global elite. Refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants are not the problem — the problem lies in conflict, persecution and hopeless poverty.

I have been pained to see the way refugees and migrants have been stereotyped and scapegoated, and to see political figures stoke resentment in search of electoral gain. In today's world, all societies are becoming multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Such diversity must be seen as a richness, not a threat. However, to make diversity a success, we need to invest in social cohesion, so that all people feel that their identities are respected and have a stake in the community as a whole.

We need to reform our world, and I am committed to reforming our United Nations. Together, we have embarked on a comprehensive reform effort: to build a United Nations development system that supports States in bettering peoples' lives, to reinforce our ability in safeguarding people's peace, security and human rights and to embrace management practices that advance those goals instead of hindering them. We have launched a new victim-centred approach to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. We have a road map to achieve gender parity at the United Nations, and we are already on our way.

We are here to serve, relieve the suffering of "we the peoples" and help fulfil their dreams. We come from different corners of the world. Our cultures, religions and traditions vary widely — and I would say wonderfully. At times, there are competing interests among us, and sometimes there is even open conflict. That is exactly why we need the United Nations. That is exactly why multilateralism is more important than ever. We call ourselves the international community. We must act as one, because only together, as united nations, can we fulfil the promise of the Charter of the United Nations and advance human dignity for all.

**The President**: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

**Statement by the President**

**The President**: Before I deliver my statement, I wish to express our solidarity with the people of

Dominica, who suffered the devastation of Hurricane Maria overnight. Our thoughts are with the others who are bracing for her impact, many of whom only recently suffered the effects of Hurricane Irma.

I am honoured to welcome everyone present to New York for the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I wish that I could deliver a different speech today to the one I have prepared. I wish I could point to a long list of examples of mediation and early action to successfully avert conflicts. I would prefer to talk only about people who move and migrate out of choice, not desperation. It would be great to congratulate everyone in this Hall for meeting individual climate-related commitments and for relegating extreme poverty to the history books. I hope that someone will, eventually, be able to deliver such a speech from this marble rostrum, but it cannot be me today. Instead, conflict persists as an ugly reality of our world. Civilians, not soldiers, are paying the highest price. Schools and hospitals, not military barracks, are the targets of attack.

I must also talk today about more than 65 million people leaving their homes because they are forced to do so, not because they want to. I have to use my speech today to address other major challenges, including persistent poverty, growing inequalities, indiscriminate terrorist attacks and the worsening effects of climate change. These are global challenges — every country is coping with at least one — but they are also individual in nature, touching on the life of each person.

That is not to say that there is nothing to celebrate today. We have made a collective promise to humankind by signing up to the Sustainable Development Goals. We have rallied in support of peace agreements such as the one that we saw in Colombia. We have said "enough is enough" when it comes to climate change by signing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

But we are not here today to dwell on our past achievements. We are here to look ahead. We will hear visions, ideas and, indeed, criticisms and concerns over the coming week. These will chart the course of the United Nations as it works to address the most urgent global challenges. I am confident that they will also travel home with representatives and influence their work as the world's leaders. I will now myself start the ball rolling by outlining my vision for the seventy-second session.

First, peace and prevention should be at the centre of everything the United Nations does, because when we read the Charter of the United Nations, there are only five references to war. The word "peace", however, appears 47 times. Unfortunately we are spending too much time and money reacting to conflicts, and not enough on preventing them. We need to recalibrate our efforts around peace and prevention. That is the only way to ensure that the United Nations is doing the job for which it was created.

I want to be clear. Placing peace and prevention first is not about requesting more capacity from the outside. The United Nations already has most of the tools it needs. What we are missing are the conditions in which they can be properly used. The resolutions on sustaining peace (General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016)) should be at the top of our toolbox. They challenge us to strengthen our response to crises before they result in the outbreak or recurrence of conflict. They call for a renewed focus on prevention. If this vision is to come to life, these resolutions must be implemented. I hope to contribute to this process during my presidency.

Prevention must become a greater part of the General Assembly's work. This will be important in our ongoing review of United Nations peace operations and our engagement with the new United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. Prevention must also be better integrated into human rights and development. When people can live decent lives, when rights are respected and when the rule of law is present in everyday life, it is harder to turn societies to conflict.

Secondly, a stronger focus must be placed on people. This is because the United Nations was not made for diplomats or dignitaries; it was made for people. We know that many people have become disillusioned. Countless others around the world, however, have high hopes for us. They see the United Nations blue flag as a first sign of safety and the beginning of change. One of the biggest tests for us will be the process to adopt the first global compact for migration, and let me be frank here — this will be a difficult process. The issue of migration is highly divisive. We all have a different opinion on it, but we cannot turn this into an exercise of bureaucracy. We cannot be left with an agreement that works only on paper.

Another major challenge that demands a focus on people is international terrorism. This is not a problem

that can be solved with guns or shut out by barriers. People are at its centre. They are the ones contributing to it. They are the ones suffering because of it. The only way to succeed in both areas will be through choosing to focus on people rather than rigidly sticking to our individual positions. We need viable global frameworks that can be implemented by people and for people in real time.

But I want to stress one thing. We cannot fail. If we do, how can we claim that the United Nations is the best forum in which to address global challenges? Those who are cynical about the United Nations will be proved right and others will find it hard to hold on to their hope. A focus on people must also be more strongly felt in the humanitarian field. United Nations access and help to those in dire need cannot be compromised by any party. Violations of international humanitarian law are too common, and accountability for these crimes is too rare.

Finally, we must keep the promises we have made to advance prosperity and protect the planet. Through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, we made a clear commitment. We promised to improve the lives of all people and secure the future of the planet we live on. However, we will not be able to achieve this without securing enough finances. We cannot sit and wait patiently for trillions of dollars to materialize. We must go out and search for them. This will involve more engagement with the private sector and financial institutions.

I see the priority clusters of peace and prevention, people, and planet and prosperity as three sides of a triangle. They might not all be the same length or the same width, but one is as important as the other. I am confident that this triangle will point in the direction of promising prospects for our world.

Let us not forget other important issues that need to be mainstreamed. Human rights are crucial; neither peace nor development can take hold without them. We must remember that we have a lot of work to do when it comes to gender equality. Women's leadership and participation should be a priority in settings of both conflict and peace.

United Nations reform will also be a main priority. There must be open and inclusive dialogue among Member States regarding the Secretary-General's reform proposals. I will work to facilitate this, and I will also personally engage closely with Member States to strengthen the role of the General Assembly. I will also promote a credible process to address the reform of the Security Council.

Finally, the United Nations should be opening its doors wider. We must strengthen our engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders, including regional and subregional organizations, civil society and the private sector. We need to hear more young voices in the Hall.

Before I conclude, allow me to make a personal observation. I want to say that we cannot call for an end to business as usual and then continue to do business as usual. If we are looking for a change in how the United Nations operates around the world, we should start here in New York. This can mean institutional change, but it can also mean a change in the way we work on a daily basis. We can engage in real dialogue, not a succession of monologues. We can concentrate on how much, and not on how little, we can give up in the spirit of compromise. We can look beyond our individual agendas and positions and see the bigger picture of why the United Nations is here and what it is trying to do.

I may not have been able to deliver a happy statement today, praising us all for making the world a better place to live in, but I will work throughout this year to increase the chances that someday one of my successors will have that great privilege. I wish the Assembly success in its deliberations, which I am confident will be in the interests of and to the benefit of all peoples.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker, I would like to remind members that the list of speakers for the general debate has been established on the agreed basis that statements should be no longer than 15 minutes so as to enable all speakers to be heard at a given meeting. Within that time frame, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable pace so that interpretation in the other official United Nations languages may be adequately provided.

I would also like to draw the Assembly's attention to the decision taken by the General Assembly at previous sessions, namely, that the practice of expressing congratulations inside the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered is strongly discouraged. In that connection, after delivering their statements, speakers are invited to exit the General Assembly Hall through Room GA-200, located behind the rostrum, before returning to their seats.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to proceed in the same manner during the general debate of the seventy-second session?

*It was so decided.*

**The President**: Finally, I should like to draw to the attention of members that during the general debate official photographs of all the speakers are taken by the Department of Public Information. Members interested in obtaining those photographs are requested to contact the Photo Library of the United Nations.

### Address by Mr. Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

*Mr. Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Temer** (*spoke in Portuguese: English interpretation provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. You can count on the continued support of the Brazilian delegation.

I am also pleased to greet the Secretary-General in our common language, Portuguese. I once again wish the Secretary-General enduring success during his tenure.

The challenges faced by the United Nations since its creation have been manifold. Additionally, we all know that the aspirations of its founders have not been fully realized. However, the truth is that over the past 72 years, the United Nations has always represented and continues to represent hope. The truth is that the United Nations has always represented and continues to represent the possibility of a fairer world; a world of peace and prosperity; a world in which no one should face discrimination, oppression and poverty; a world in which production and consumption patterns are compatible with the well-being of present and future generations.

The United Nations has established itself as a privileged forum to build the world to which we aspire. In order to build that world, we need proper methods and a sense of realism, all without ever losing sight of our ideals. At the current moment in history, which features such distinct uncertainty and instability, there is a clear need for more diplomacy and more negotiation, not less. We need more multilateralism and dialogue, not less. We certainly need more of the United Nations. We need the United Nations to be increasingly legitimate and effective.

It is for that reason that, along with many other countries, we uphold the imperative of reforming the United Nations. It is particularly necessary to enlarge the Security Council in order to adapt it to the realities of the twenty-first century. It is urgent that we listen to the will of the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly.

One should not assume that ideas that have proved erroneous in the past may now yield good results. We reject exacerbated forms of nationalism. We do not believe in protectionism as a solution to economic challenges. Those challenges actually require effective responses to the root causes of social exclusion. The pursuit of development in all its dimensions should guide our collective action.

Brazil's commitment to sustainable development is our top priority. It permeates our public policies and our actions abroad. During our chairmanship of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, for instance, we made the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the driving blueprint for our efforts in that forum. On all fronts, Brazil has sought to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Combating climate change is a necessary part of that contribution. We stand committed to supporting the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Last year, I submitted the Brazilian instrument of ratification of the Agreement. There is no possibility of postponing action in the sphere of tackling climate change. We must act now.

I am proud to say that my country is leading the way towards a low-carbon economy. Clean and renewable energy sources account for more than 40 per cent of the Brazilian energy portfolio, which is three times more than the global average. We are leaders in hydroelectricity and bioenergy. Brazil is proud to have the world's highest tropical forest cover. Deforestation

is a matter of concern, especially in the Amazon. We have been drawing attention and allocating resources to that issue. Some good news is that data from the past year point to a reduction of more than 20 per cent in deforestation in the Amazonian region. We are on the right track and on that track we shall remain.

Another key factor of development is trade. We are committed to an open and rules-based international trade system, with the World Trade Organization and its dispute-settlement mechanism at its centre. At the upcoming Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in Buenos Aires in December, we will once again have to face up to long-standing issues, which have proved detrimental mainly to developing countries. We will have to make progress on market access to agricultural products and on eliminating agricultural subsidies that distort trade. We believe that, together, we will succeed in achieving concrete results. All these efforts contribute to the accomplishment of our main objective: to ensure opportunities for all, everywhere.

Tomorrow, I will have the honour of signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Brazil was among the drafters of the Treaty. It will be a historic moment. We reiterate our call for the nuclear Powers to undertake additional disarmament obligations. In this regard, Brazil expresses itself with the authority of a country that, while mastering nuclear technology, has voluntarily given up possessing nuclear weapons. Brazil expresses itself with the authority of a country whose own Constitution prohibits the use of nuclear technology for non-peaceful purposes; a country that was at the origin of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which, half a century ago, established the denuclearization of Latin America and the Caribbean; a country that, along with its South American and African neighbours, has turned the South Atlantic into a nuclear-weapon-free zone; lastly, a country that, along with Argentina, created a binational nuclear safeguards mechanism, which has become a benchmark for the world at large.

As we welcome the achievement represented by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we must acknowledge that there are lingering issues of serious concern on the peace and security agenda. The recent nuclear and missile tests on the Korean peninsula constitute a serious threat to which none of us can be indifferent. Brazil condemns these acts in the strongest possible terms. We must urgently seek a peaceful resolution to the current situation, whose consequences are unimaginable.

In the Middle East, talks between Israel and Palestine remain at a standstill. As a friend of both Palestinians and Israelis, Brazil continues to support the solution of two States living side by side in peace and security, within internationally recognized and mutually agreed borders.

In Syria, despite the de-escalation of recent months, we are still witnessing a conflict with tragic humanitarian consequences. The solution that must be sought in Syria is essentially political in nature and can no longer be postponed. Similarly, in Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Mali and the Central African Republic, wars have caused intolerable suffering that extends beyond borders.

Let us visit the refugee and displaced person camps in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Kenya. Let us listen to the stories of those who have lost fathers, mothers, sons and daughters. These families have been engulfed by the irrationality of conflicts that seem to know no limits, conflicts that result in violations of humanitarian law with unacceptable frequency.

Our Secretary-General is right. We should reinvigorate the mechanisms of conflict prevention. Prevention is about diplomacy. It is about development.

It is crucial to recognize the nexus between security and development. This recognition has guided Brazil's participation in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). As MINUSTAH concludes its mandate, the international community must maintain its commitment to the Haitian people. Brazil certainly will do so.

In South America, Colombia is ending more than 50 years of conflict. Brazil will continue to be a resolute partner in this effort.

From Barcelona to Kabul, from Alexandria to Manchester, repeated demonstrations of cowardly violence do not let us forget the evil of terrorism. This evil feeds on fundamentalism and exclusion, and no country is immune to it. Unity is crucial, particularly in view of the capacity of terrorism to adapt to new ages and environments. We will not be frightened by terror, nor will we allow it to weaken our belief in freedom and tolerance.

In many of our countries, transnational crime also undermines the security and tranquillity of individuals and families. Only through coordination and collaboration will we effectively combat trafficking in persons, arms and drugs, and money-laundering. It was in this spirit that Brazil organized, in November 2016, a ministerial meeting of South American countries on border security, and it is in this spirit that we will continue cooperating with countries around the world to tackle organized crime.

Regrettably, human rights violations remain frequent throughout the world — both violations of civil and political rights, as well as of economic, social and cultural rights. We must ensure that every individual everywhere can live with dignity, according to his or her convictions and choices.

Brazil is a country of deep-rooted liberties, which was and is still being built on a foundation of diversity — diversity of ethnicity, culture, creed and thought. More than anything, it is from this diversity that we draw our strength as a nation. We reject racism, xenophobia and all other forms of discrimination. We are party to the main international human rights treaties and members of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court. We have extended a standing invitation to United Nations special rapporteurs.

Today we have one of the most modern refugee laws in the world. We have just updated our immigration law, guided by the principle of humanitarian reception. We have granted humanitarian visas to Haitian and Syrian citizens and we have welcomed thousands of migrants and refugees from Venezuela.

The human rights situation in Venezuela continues to deteriorate. We are on the side of the Venezuelan people, with whom we share a fraternal bond. In South America, there is no longer room for alternatives to democracy. This is what we have stated in MERCOSUR and what we will continue to uphold.

Brazil is going through a moment of decisive transformation. With structural reforms, we are overcoming an unprecedented economic crisis. We are recovering our fiscal balance, and with it, the credibility of our economy. We are once again creating jobs. We are recovering the State's capacity to implement social policies that are indispensable to a country like ours. We have learned and are applying this elementary rule in practice: without fiscal responsibility, social responsibility is nothing more than empty words. The new Brazil that is emerging from these reforms is a country that is more open to the world.

That is the attitude of openness that we bring to the United Nations, as well as to MERCOSUR; the Group of 20; the Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa group of countries; the India, Brazil and South Africa group of countries; and to all forums in which we participate. It is the attitude of openness that we have adopted towards each of our partners in our region and beyond it.

South America is our immediate neighbour. For that reason, we have worked for a prosperous and democratic South America. We have worked for an increasing convergence of the integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean. A significant example thereof are the present closer ties between the Southern Common Market and the Pacific Alliance. Together, the countries of these two different groups constitute a market of almost 470 million people, which accounts for over 90 per cent of Latin America's gross domestic product.

Africa, in turn, is a continent with which we are associated by strong historical and cultural ties. Africa is a continent where we wish to have both increasing cooperation initiatives and partnerships for development. With regard to Europe, we have cultivated long-standing friendships and we have worked to boost trade and investment flows there. Likewise in Asia and the Pacific region — the most dynamic hub of the global economy — we have stepped up our relations with both traditional partners and with new ones. We have also opened up new trade fronts with Asia and the Pacific.

This has been our foreign policy — a truly universalist foreign policy. And the fact is that the General Assembly is the most universal of all forums we have and can count on. Here, we can all benefit from the broadest and most pluralistic array of perspectives. Here, we find the parameters and standards that govern respectful coexistence. And here our nations shall become more united, and aim at the ultimate development of our peoples, the dignity of our citizens and the security of our planet.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Michel Temer, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Donald Trump, President of the United States of America**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

*Mr. Donald Trump, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Donald Trump, President of the United States of America, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Trump**: I welcome everyone to New York. It is a profound honour to stand here in my home city as a representative of the American people to address the people of the world.

As millions of our citizens continue to suffer the effects of the devastating hurricanes that have struck our country, I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to every leader in the Hall who has offered assistance and aid. The American people are strong and resilient, and they will emerge from these hardships more determined than ever before.

Fortunately, the United States of America has done very well since election day, last 8 November. The stock market is at an all-time high. That is a record. Unemployment is at its lowest level in 16 years, and because of our regulatory and other reforms, we have more people working in the United States today than ever before. Companies are moving back, creating job growth the likes of which our country has not seen in a very long time, and it has just been announced that we will be spending almost $700 billion on our military and defence. Our military will soon be the strongest it has ever been.

For more than 70 years, in times of war and peace, the leaders of nations, movements and religions have stood before the Assembly. Like them, I intend to address some of the very serious threats before us today, but also the enormous potential waiting to be unleashed. We live in a time of extraordinary opportunity. Breakthroughs in science, technology and medicine are curing illnesses and solving problems that prior generations thought impossible to solve.

But each day also brings news of growing dangers that threaten everything we cherish and value. Terrorists and extremists have gathered strength and spread to every region of the planet. Rogue regimes represented in this organ not only support terrorists, but threaten other nations and their own people with the most destructive weapons known to humankind. Authoritarian Powers seek to collapse the values, systems and alliances that have prevented conflict and tilted the world towards freedom since the Second World War. International criminal networks traffic drugs, weapons and people; force dislocation and mass migration; and threaten our borders. New forms of aggression exploit technology to menace our citizens.

To put it simply, we meet at a time of both immense promise and great peril. It is entirely up to us whether we lift the world to new heights or let it fall into a valley of disrepair. We have it in our power, should we so choose, to lift millions from poverty, to help citizens realize their dreams and to ensure that new generations of children are raised free from violence, hatred and fear.

This institution was founded in the aftermath of two world wars to help shape this better future. It is based on the vision that diverse nations could cooperate to protect their sovereignty, preserve their security and promote their prosperity. It was in the same period, exactly 70 years ago, that the United States developed the Marshall Plan to help restore Europe, based on the three beautiful pillars of peace, sovereignty and security, and prosperity. The Marshall Plan was built on the noble idea that the whole world is safer when nations are strong, independent and free. As President Truman said in his message to Congress at that time, "Our support of European recovery is in full accord with our support of the United Nations".

The success of the United Nations depends upon the independent strength of its Members. To overcome the perils of the present and to achieve the promise of the future, we must begin with the wisdom of the past. Our success depends on a coalition of strong and independent nations that embrace their sovereignty to promote security, prosperity and peace for themselves and for the world.

We do not expect diverse countries to share the same cultures, traditions or even systems of Government, but we do expect all nations to uphold the two core

sovereign duties to respect the interests of their own people and the rights of every other sovereign nation. That is the beautiful vision of this institution, and it is the foundation for cooperation and success. Strong sovereign nations let diverse countries with different values, different cultures and different dreams not just coexist but work side by side on the basis of mutual respect. Strong sovereign nations let their people take ownership of the future and control their own destiny. Strong, sovereign nations allow individuals to flourish in the fullness of the life intended by God.

In America, we seek not to impose our way of life on anyone, but rather to let it shine as an example for everyone to watch. This week gives our country a special reason to take pride in that example. We are celebrating the 230th anniversary of our beloved Constitution, the oldest constitution still in use in the world today. That timeless document has been the foundation of peace, prosperity and freedom for the Americans and for countless millions around the globe whose own countries have found inspiration in its respect for human nature, human dignity and the rule of law. The greatest part of the United States Constitution is its first three beautiful words. They are "We the people". Generations of Americans have sacrificed to maintain the promise of those words, the promise of our country and of our great history. In America, the people govern, the people rule, and the people are sovereign.

I was elected not to take power but to give power to the American people, where it belongs. In foreign affairs, we are renewing this founding principle of sovereignty. Our Government's first duty is to its people, to our citizens; to serve their needs, to ensure their safety, to preserve their rights and to defend their values. As President of the United States, I will always put America first, just as the leaders of the countries present will always and should always put their countries first. All responsible leaders have an obligation to serve their own citizens, and the nation State remains the best vehicle for elevating the human condition. But making a better life for our people also requires us to work together in close harmony and unity to create a more safe and peaceful future for all people. The United States will forever be a great friend to the world, and especially to its allies, but we can no longer be taken advantage of or enter into one-sided deals where the United States gets nothing in return.

As long as I hold my office, I will defend America's interest above all else; but in fulfilling our obligations to our own nations, we also realize that it is in everyone's interest to seek a future where all nations can be sovereign, prosperous and secure. America does more than speak for the values expressed in the Charter of the United Nations. Our citizens have paid the ultimate price to defend our freedom and the freedom of many nations represented in this great Hall. America's devotion is measured on the battlefields where our young men and women have fought and sacrificed alongside our allies. From the beaches of Europe, to the deserts of the Middle East, to the jungles of Asia, it is an eternal credit to the American character that even after we and our allies emerged victorious from the bloodiest war in history, we did not seek territorial expansion or attempt to oppose and impose our way of life on others. Instead, we helped to build institutions such as this one to defend the sovereignty, security and prosperity of all.

For the diverse nations of the world, this is our hope. We want harmony and friendship, not conflict and strife. We are guided by outcomes, not ideology. We have a policy of principled realism rooted in shared goals, interests and values. That realism forces us to confront a question facing every leader and nation in the Hall. It is a question we cannot escape or avoid. Will we slide down the path of complacency, numb to the challenges, threats and even wars that we face, or do we have enough strength and pride to confront those dangers today so that our citizens can enjoy peace and prosperity tomorrow?

If we desire to lift up our citizens, if we aspire to the approval of history, then we must fulfil our sovereign duties to the people we faithfully represent. We must protect our nations, their interests and their futures. We must reject threats to sovereignty, from Ukraine to the South China Sea. We must uphold respect for law, respect for borders and respect for culture and the peaceful engagement these allow. And, just as the founders of this organ intended, we must work together and confront together those who threaten us with chaos, turmoil and terror.

The scourge of our planet today is a small group of rogue regimes that violate every principle on which the United Nations is based. They respect neither their own citizens nor the sovereign rights of their countries. If the righteous many do not confront the wicked few, then evil will triumph. When decent people and nations become bystanders to history, the forces of destruction only gather power and strength.

No one has shown more contempt for other nations and for the well-being of their own people than the depraved regime in North Korea. It is responsible for the starvation deaths of millions of North Koreans and for the imprisonment, torture, killing and oppression of countless more. We were all witness to the regime's deadly abuse when an innocent American college student, Otto Warmbier, was returned to America only to die a few days later. We saw it in the assassination of the dictator's brother, using banned nerve agents in an international airport. We know it kidnapped a sweet 13-year-old Japanese girl from a beach in her own country to enslave her as a language tutor for North Korea's spies.

If that were not twisted enough, now North Korea's reckless pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles threatens the entire world with unthinkable loss of human life. It is an outrage that some nations would not only trade with such a regime, but would arm, supply and financially support a country that imperils the world with nuclear conflict. No nation on Earth has an interest in seeing this band of criminals arm itself with nuclear weapons and missiles. The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea. Rocket man is on a suicide mission for himself and for his regime. The United States is ready, willing and able but, hopefully, that will not be necessary. That is what the United Nations is all about. That is what the United Nations is for. Let us see how they do.

It is time for North Korea to realize that denuclearization is its only acceptable future. The Security Council recently held two unanimous 15-to-nothing votes, adopting hard-hitting resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like to thank China and Russia for joining the vote to impose sanctions, along with all of the other members of the Security Council. I thank all who were involved, but we must do much more. It is time for all nations to work together to isolate the Kim regime until it ceases its hostile behaviour.

We face that decision not only in North Korea. It is far past time for the nations of the world to confront another reckless regime — one that speaks openly of mass murder, vowing death to America, destruction to Israel and ruin for many leaders and nations represented in the Hall today. The Iranian Government masks a corrupt dictatorship behind the false guise of a democracy. It has turned a wealthy country with a rich history and culture into an economically depleted rogue State whose chief exports are violence, bloodshed and chaos. The longest-suffering victims of Iran's leaders are in fact its own people. Rather than use its resources to improve Iranian lives, its oil profits go to fund Hizbullah and other terrorists who kill innocent Muslims and attack their peaceful Arab and Israeli neighbours.

That wealth, which rightly belongs to Iran's people, also goes to shore up Bashar Al-Assad's dictatorship, fuel Yemen's civil war and undermine peace throughout the entire Middle East. We cannot let a murderous regime continue such destabilizing activities, while building dangerous missiles. And we cannot abide by an agreement if it provides cover for the eventual construction of a nuclear programme.

The Iran deal was one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into. Frankly, that deal is an embarrassment to the United States — and I do not think that the Assembly has heard the last of it, believe me. It is time for the entire world to join us in demanding that Iran's Government end its pursuit of death and destruction. It is time for the regime to free all the Americans and citizens of other nations whom they have unjustly detained. Above all, Iran's Government must stop supporting terrorists, begin serving its own people and respect the sovereign rights of its neighbours.

The entire world understands that the good people of Iran want change and, other than the vast military power of the United States, that Iran's people are what their leaders fear the most. That is what causes the regime to restrict Internet access, tear down satellite dishes, shoot unarmed student protesters and imprison political reformers. Oppressive regimes cannot endure forever, and the day will come when the people will face a choice. Will they continue down the path of poverty, bloodshed and terror, or will the Iranian people return to the nation's proud roots as a centre of civilization, culture and wealth, where people can be happy and prosperous once again?

The Iranian regime's support for terror is in stark contrast to the recent commitments of many of its neighbours to fight terrorism and halt its financing. In Saudi Arabia, early last year, I was greatly honoured to address the leaders of more than 50 Arab and Muslim nations. We agree that all responsible nations must

work together to confront terrorists and the Islamic extremism that inspires them. We will stop radical Islamic terrorism because we cannot allow it to tear up our nation and, indeed, to tear up the entire world.

We must deny terrorists safe haven, transit, funding and any form of support for their vile and sinister ideology. We must drive them out of our nations. It is time to expose and hold responsible those countries that support and finance terror groups, such as Al-Qaida, Hizbullah, the Taliban and others that slaughter innocent people. The United States and its allies are working together throughout the Middle East to crush loser terrorists and stop the re-emergence of the safe havens they use to launch attacks on all of our people.

Last month, I announced a new strategy for victory in the fight against that evil in Afghanistan. From now on, our security interests — not the arbitrary benchmarks and timetables set up by politicians — will dictate the length and scope of military operations. I have also totally changed the rules of engagement in our fight against the Taliban and other terrorist groups. In Syria and Iraq, we have made big gains towards lasting defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). In fact, our country has achieved more against ISIS in the last eight months than it has in many years combined.

We seek the de-escalation of the Syrian conflict and a political solution that honours the will of the Syrian people. The actions of the criminal regime of Bashar Al-Assad, including the use of chemical weapons against his own citizens, even innocent children, shocked the conscience of every decent person. No society can be safe if banned chemical weapons are allowed to spread. That is why the United States carried out a missile strike on the air base that launched the attack. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations agencies that are providing vital humanitarian assistance in the areas liberated from ISIS. We especially thank Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon for their role in hosting refugees from the Syrian conflict.

The United States is a compassionate nation and has spent billions and billions of dollars to help support that effort. We seek an approach to refugee resettlement that is designed to help those horribly treated and enable their eventual return to their home countries to be part of the rebuilding process. For the cost of resettling one refugee in the United States, we can assist more than 10 in their home region. Out of the goodness of our hearts, we offer financial assistance to host countries in the region and we support the recent agreements of the Group of 20 nations that will seek to host refugees as close to their home countries as possible.

That is the safe, responsible and humanitarian approach. For decades, the United States has dealt with migration challenges here in the western hemisphere. We have learned that, over the long term, uncontrolled migration is deeply unfair to both the sending and the receiving countries. For the sending countries, it reduces domestic pressure to pursue needed political and economic reforms and drains them of the human capital necessary to motivate and implement those reforms. For the receiving countries, the substantial costs of uncontrolled migration are borne overwhelmingly by low-income citizens, whose concerns are often ignored by both media and Government.

I want to salute the work of the United Nations in seeking to address the problems that cause people to flee from their homes. The United Nations- and the African Union-led peacekeeping missions have made invaluable contributions in stabilizing conflicts in Africa.

The United States continues to lead the world in humanitarian assistance, including famine prevention and relief in South Sudan, Somalia, northern Nigeria and Yemen. We have invested in better health and opportunity all over the world through programmes like the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative, the Global Health Security Agenda, the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery, and the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative, which is part of our commitment to empowering women all across the globe.

We also thank the Secretary-General for recognizing that the United Nations must reform if it is to be an effective partner in confronting threats to sovereignty, security and prosperity. Too often the focus of the Organization has not been on results, but on bureaucracy and process. In some cases, States that seek to subvert this institution's noble ends have hijacked the very systems that are supposed to advance them. For example, it is a massive source of embarrassment to the United Nations that some Governments with egregious human rights records sit on the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The United States is one of 193 countries in the United Nations, and yet we pay 22 per cent of the entire

budget and more. In fact, we pay far more than anybody realizes. The United States bears an unfair cost burden, but, to be fair, if it could actually accomplish all of its stated goals, especially the goal of peace, this investment would easily be well worth it.

Major portions of the world are in conflict, and some in fact are going to hell, but the powerful people in this Hall, under the guidance and auspices of the United Nations, can solve many of these vicious and complex problems. The American people hope that one day soon the United Nations can be a much more accountable and effective advocate for human dignity and freedom around the world. In the meantime, we believe that no nation should have to bear a disproportionate share of the burden — militarily or financially.

Nations of the world must take a greater role in promoting secure and prosperous societies in their own regions. That is why, in the western hemisphere, the United States has stood against the corrupt destabilizing regime in Cuba and embraced the enduring dream of the Cuban people to live in freedom. My Administration recently announced that we will not lift sanctions on the Cuban Government until it makes fundamental reforms.

We have also imposed tough, calibrated sanctions on the socialist Maduro regime in Venezuela, which has brought a once-thriving nation to the brink of total collapse. The socialist dictatorship of Nicolás Maduro Moros has inflicted terrible pain and suffering on the good people of that country. This corrupt regime destroyed a prosperous nation by imposing a failed ideology that has produced poverty and misery everywhere it has been tried. To make matters worse, Maduro has defied his own people, stealing power from their elected representatives to preserve his disastrous rule.

The Venezuelan people are starving, and their country is collapsing. Their democratic institutions are being destroyed. This situation is completely unacceptable, and we cannot stand by and watch. As a responsible neighbour and friend, we, together with all others, have a goal: to help them regain their freedom, recover their country and restore their democracy.

I would like to thank leaders in this Hall for condemning the regime and providing vital support to the Venezuelan people. The United States has taken important steps to hold the regime accountable. We are prepared to take further action if the Government of Venezuela persists on its path to impose authoritarian rule on the Venezuelan people.

We are fortunate to have incredibly strong and healthy trade relationships with many of the Latin American countries gathered here today. Our economic bond forms a critical foundation for advancing peace and prosperity for all of our peoples and all of our neighbours. I ask every country represented here today to be prepared to do more to address this very real crisis. We call for the full restoration of democracy and political freedoms in Venezuela.

The problem in Venezuela is not that socialism has been poorly implemented, but that socialism has been faithfully implemented. From the Soviet Union to Cuba to Venezuela, wherever true socialism or communism has been adopted, it has delivered anguish and devastation and failure. Those who preach the tenets of those discredited ideologies only contribute to the continued suffering of the people who live under those cruel systems. America stands with every person living under a brutal regime. Our respect for sovereignty is also a call for action.

All people deserve a Government that cares for their safety, their interests and their well-being, including their prosperity. In America, we seek stronger ties of business and trade with all nations of goodwill, but that trade must be fair and it must be reciprocal. For too long the American people were told that mammoth multinational trade deals, unaccountable international tribunals and powerful global bureaucracies were the best way to promote their success. But as those promises flowed, millions of jobs vanished and thousands of factories disappeared. Others gamed the system and broke the rules, and our great middle class, once the bedrock of American prosperity, was forgotten and left behind. But they are forgotten no more, and they will never be forgotten again.

While America will pursue cooperation and commerce with other nations, we are renewing our commitment to the first duty of every Government: the duty to our citizens. This bond is the source of America's strength and that of every responsible nation represented here today. If the Organization is to have any hope of successfully confronting the challenges before us, it will depend, as President Truman said some 70 years ago, on the independent strength of its Members. If we are to embrace the opportunities of the future and overcome the present dangers together,

there can be no substitute for strong, sovereign and independent nations, nations that are rooted in their histories and invested in their destinies; nations that seek allies to befriend, not enemies to conquer; and most important of all, nations that are home to patriots, to men and women who are willing to sacrifice for their countries, their fellow citizens and for all that is best in the human spirit.

In remembering the great victory that led to this body's founding, we must never forget that those heroes who fought against evil also fought for the nations that they love. Patriotism led the Poles to die to save Poland, the French to fight for a free France and the Brits to stand strong for Britain. Today if we do not invest ourselves, our hearts and our minds in our nations, if we will not build strong families, safe communities and healthy societies for ourselves, no one can do it for us. We cannot wait for someone else, for faraway countries or far-off bureaucracies. We cannot do it.

We must solve our problems to build our prosperity, to secure our future, or we will be vulnerable to decay, domination and defeat. The true question for the United Nations today, for people all over the world who hope for better lives for themselves and their children is a basic one: are we still patriots? Do we love our nations enough to protect their sovereignty and to take ownership of their futures? Do we revere them enough to defend their interests, preserve their cultures and ensure a peaceful world for their citizens?

One of the greatest American patriots, John Adams, wrote that the American Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people. That was the moment when America awoke, when we looked around and understood that we were a nation. We realized who we were, what we valued and what we would give our lives to defend. From its very first moments, the American story is the story of what is possible when people take ownership of their future. The United States of America has been among the greatest forces for good in the history of the world and the greatest defenders of sovereignty, security and prosperity for all.

Now we are calling for a great reawakening of nations, for the revival of their spirits, their pride, their people and their patriotism. History is asking us whether we are up to the task. Our answer will be a renewal of will, a rediscovery of resolve and a rebirth of devotion. We need to defeat the enemies of humankind and unlock the potential of life itself. Our hope is a word and a world of proud, independent nations that embrace their duties, seek friendship, respect others and make common cause in the greatest shared interest of all, a future of dignity and peace for the people of this wonderful Earth. This is the true vision of the United Nations, the ancient wish of every people and the deepest yearning that lives inside every sacred soul.

So let this be our mission and let this be our message to the world: we will fight together, sacrifice together and stand together for peace, for freedom, for justice, for family, for humankind and for the Almighty God who made us all.

God bless the nations of the world and God bless the United States of America.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Donald Trump, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

*The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 10.50 a.m.*

## Address by Mr. Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guinea.

*Mr. Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Condé** (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me, as the current Chairman of the African Union, to take the floor in this melting pot of multilateralism to address the Assembly. The theme that unites us is "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet". It is a topic of particular relevance to the African continent.

At the outset, I would like to convey my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. I have no doubt with respect to the dynamism that you

will imprint on our work in order to build on the work of your predecessor, Mr. Peter Thomson, to whom we pay tribute for having made Africa his priority, thereby bestowing a remarkable impetus to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Africa, once subjugated, enslaved, malleable and marginalized, has awoken. It has risen up to fight for sustainable development, justice and good governance. Today more than ever, Africa is determined to take its destiny into its own hands. It is fully determined to be the main stakeholder in its development and to fully play its role in the management of international affairs.

The task will not be easy. However, we have faith because we have the potential and the assets necessary to lift our continent to great heights on the world stage. With that in mind, Africa extends a sincere and friendly hand to all partners of goodwill, conscious of the following principles: that there can exist true happiness only when it is shared; that there can be wealth only when it is equitably distributed; that there can be viable and supportive partnership only when it is equal; that there can be enduring peace only when it is inclusive; that there can be sustainable development only when it respects and consolidates the dignity of peoples.

The interdependence of the challenges facing humankind necessitates a paradigm shift in our perceptions and actions, particularly in Africa, whose priorities must be understood not through empathy but rather through pragmatism. In today's world, destinies of States are no longer isolated. Massive refugee flows, large-scale migrations, natural disasters and pandemics, which all touch on our collective consciousness, represent the sad illustration of that reality. Our new approach should place more emphasis on human beings and the restoration of their dignity if we want to eradicate poverty and achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda at the international level and Agenda 2063 at the regional level constitute major steps forward in our fight against poverty, provided that we honour our commitments.

The fact that Africa is lagging will not always be the case. Africa has been the most dynamic continent over the past decade. According to forecasts by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, that growth will continue despite falling prices of raw materials, which are set outside the continent, and the fact that our economies remain heavily dependent on them. Given that situation, we need to diversify our economies and make them more resilient through increased investment in the sectors with real potential for sustainable growth, such as agriculture, infrastructure, information and communications technologies and energy.

The industrialization and structural transformation to which Africa aspires will depend not only on our access to energy, but above all on the continent's economic integration through the effective implementation of the continental free trade area, which is a prelude to an African common market. Africans yearn for prosperity, which is energetically embraced by the young population and is being addressed energetically by African leaders, who have decided to dedicate the African Union theme to 2017 to youth and to proclaim 2018-2027 the African Decade for Technical, Professional and Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment.

The African Union has resolutely undertaken to find lasting solutions to the numerous challenges confronting young people with a view to making that stratum of society, which represents 70 per cent of our population, the real driving force of development on our continent. That will guarantee stability, security, peace and the harmonious and sustainable development of our planet. I therefore cannot fail to advocate for an African initiative aimed at recruiting, training and deploying 2 million community health-care workers throughout the whole of the continent. I urge the international community to support that initiative, which will create decent jobs, prevent pandemics and ensure the well-being of our peoples.

Africa has decided to take responsibility for itself and to speak henceforth with one voice in order to find lasting solutions to its problems. The appointment of Heads of State as champions allows the African Union to talk with one voice on crucial matters. We have launched an institutional reform process to enhance the effectiveness of our Organization, streamline its action and reaffirm its political, economic and financial autonomy, thereby enabling us to play a leading role on the international scene.

The Kigali decision to impose a 0.2 per cent levy on eligible imports to finance the African Union demonstrates Africa's resolve to shoulder its responsibilities. In the same vein, we are determined to eradicate hotspots in Africa by promoting dialogue and finding African solutions. We urge the international

community to focus its action to that end, in particular in Libya, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, where some parallel initiatives are inhibiting the return to stability. Africa must no longer be left on the sidelines of decisions affecting it. To that end, it will strive to establish an international institutional architecture equipped to effect the changes our people rightly expect.

The Security Council, which has the primary responsibility of maintaining world peace and security, no longer reflects current realities. How is it that Africa, the third Power in terms of demography in the world, is not represented at an appropriate level within the Security Council, while 70 per cent of questions discussed there affect Africa? It is high time to repair that injustice, which has gone on for too long. We reiterate the pertinence of the African Common Position as contained in the Ezulwini Consensus. We call for the enlargement of the Security Council in the two categories of membership, including two permanent seats and a total of five non-permanent seats for Africa, chosen by the African Union. Furthermore, if it is not possible to abolish the veto, the new permanent members of the Security Council must enjoy the same prerogatives and privileges as the current members.

In terms of managing crises and conflicts in Africa, the African Union promotes a regional approach. Partnership between the United Nations and the African Union must be part of a dynamic to build the capacities for action of regions, which can best understand the root causes of crises and conflicts and find appropriate solutions to them. To that end, Security Council resolution 2359 (2017), on the deployment on the joint force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, is an important milestone towards consolidating the partnership that we are seeking on questions of peace and security in Africa. I reiterate our appeal for the effective mobilization of the resources necessary to operationalize that force.

The African Union will spare no effort to assume its responsibility to contribute 25 per cent to the financing of peacekeeping operations in Africa, as mandated by the Security Council. Regarding the prospect of silencing the guns by 2020, we welcome the vision of Secretary-General António Guterres, placing the quest for peace at the heart of his action, with a particular focus on preventive diplomacy.

The African Union is fully committed to prioritizing prevention, mediation, promoting dialogue, finding peaceful political solutions and peacebuilding, which are less costly than peacekeeping operations, the effectiveness of which raises many questions. We encourage the reform initiative of Secretary-General Guterres, in particular the restructuring of the peace and security architecture, and recall that in order for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations to be viable and effective, it must include all Member States, which must be able to make their contributions through the dedicated intergovernmental processes.

Regarding terrorism and extreme violence, the African Union firmly condemns the barbaric acts that have struck Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, Spain, France and Iran, and reiterates its deep sympathy to and solidarity with the Governments and peoples affected by those heinous crimes. The African Union considers that only through increased international cooperation, especially with respect to the exchange of information and intelligence, will we be able to fight that scourge and stem its sources of financing. It goes without saying that our aims will be fully achieved only if additional efforts are deployed to eradicate poverty, exclusion and radicalization. We can defeat terrorism once and for allonly all by putting an end to poverty, as it flourishes in that climate. Africa must therefore manage its energy and develop its infrastructure in order to ensure inclusive development.

How can we remain silent confronted with the daily torments of the Palestinian people, victims of occupation? The African Union reiterates its unfailing support to the long-suffering people of Palestine in its legitimate struggle to reaffirm its inalienable right to independence. Africa remains convinces that any viable and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict necessarily involves the creation of two States living side by side in security, within secure, internationally recognized borders based on those before 1967.

We also remain very concerned by the situation on the Korean peninsula, and we urge all parties to exercise restraint. We reaffirm our commitment to the total denuclearization of the peninsula, in line with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The twenty-first century will undoubtedly be the moment when Africans will have a bigger and more decisive say. There is an increasingly strong feeling among African leaders and young people that the time

for renewal has come. African women and young people are determined to write a new page in the history of humankind. Let us give them the opportunity or they will seize it for themselves. Together, let us create a globalization that is more humane and positive. Let us make our planet safer and let us preserve it. To that end, the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Plan of Action and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change offer a reference framework. Let us strive to implement them effectively.

I cannot conclude without launching an urgent appeal to the international community to provide better assistance to Sierra Leone, affected by one of the worst natural disasters in its history. Once again, we offer our compassion to and solidarity with the people and Government of that brotherly country.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Guinea for the statement just made.

*Mr. Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: Before proceeding further, I would like to request that representatives make an effort to maintain silence in the General Assembly Hall in order not to interrupt the proceedings and out of courtesy to other delegations. I rely on those present to cooperate in maintaining order and quiet in the Hall, in keeping with the dignity and the decorum expected of members of the General Assembly.

### Address by Ms. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Swiss Confederation.

*Ms. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency, Ms. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

**Ms. Leuthard** (*spoke in French*): I wish to express my sincere condolences to the Government and the citizens of Dominica and the Caribbean region, who are suffering from the destruction caused by the hurricanes. Switzerland will support the region.

Since the year 2000, humankind has made remarkable progress in the fight against these major scourges: hunger, extreme poverty and difficulties in accessing education. But famine still affects 800 million people in the world, and every 10 seconds a child dies from malnutrition. Other challenges include climate change, global inequality, conflict and humanitarian disasters, as well as forced displacement and migration. No country, no actor on the world stage is in a position to find, alone, the answers to the challenges of today. They are too large. They are too complex. They transcend borders, and they concern the entire international community.

We therefore need a forum where we can meet. We need a forum where we can develop solutions and monitor their implementation. We need an actor with the necessary legitimacy to contribute to the implementation of these solutions on the ground.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to recall Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. The purpose of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security and, to that end, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace. Collective, not individual. Because I am a patriot and because I defend, as the President of Switzerland, the interests of my country, we need a strong multilateral system. We need a strong United Nations.

(*spoke in French*)

In other words, we need the United Nations, and we need a strong United Nations. The fact that we must be reminded of that is a sign that should put us on alert. In order to preserve and strengthen the capacity of the United Nations, we must invest ceaselessly. Switzerland is actively involved in that regard. Investment in substantive issues is a top priority. It is important that we place at the heart of the activities of the United Nations the issues that will be of fundamental importance, tomorrow as today.

In that regard, the States Members of the United Nations have made important strides in recent years. I am thinking, of course, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and of the desire to transfer resources from post-conflict management to prevention, in order

to intensify peacebuilding activities. In those areas, it is necessary to make progress towards the objectives set. In that respect, the 2030 Agenda offers a good example. Its success will be measured by the yardstick of its implementation.

Important steps have also been taken within the United Nations. Switzerland welcomes in particular the reforms of the United Nations system that Secretary-General Guterres is working to achieve in the three areas of peace and security, development and management.

With regard to peace and security, Switzerland supports the priority that the Secretary-General gives to prevention for a very simple reason. When a conflict arises, the price to pay — humanitarian, economic and financial — is much higher than the cost of prevention activities. In order to strengthen conflict prevention, it is essential to promote human rights. Switzerland calls on all States to support the appeal of 13 June, which calls for human rights to be at the core of conflict prevention. Increasing mediation capabilities is another important means of preventing conflicts. In addition, the Global High-level Panel on Water and Peace, launched at the initiative of Switzerland, proposed yesterday, here in New York, measures to better prevent water-related conflicts. The United Nations and regional organizations can play a major role in that regard.

Switzerland is actively committed to the non-proliferation and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the use of which would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. It is convinced that only negotiations and a diplomatic process will lead to a solution to the security situation posed by the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula.

Trust is another important aspect. If an actor is to be able to take effective preventive measures, that actor needs to be trusted. For the United Nations, this means that the quality of the partnership established with the host State concerned and its population is of paramount importance. Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse break this relationship of trust. That is why Switzerland supports the Secretary-General's action against all forms of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation committed by United Nations staff in the field. As part of its commitment to that issue, Switzerland will contribute to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

With regard to the United Nations development system, we welcome the proposal to further encourage joint initiatives by the various entities of the Organization.

Allow me to mention two examples of areas where we face major challenges: migration and digital technology.

By the end of 2016, the number of displaced persons across the world had reached a level not seen since the Second World War. The majority of them have been displaced in their own country. In Europe, for example, we must succeed in finding a solution based on solidarity between countries, and we must stabilize the political situation in Libya. Switzerland is working to ensure that the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration addresses not only the challenges caused by international migration, but also its opportunities. The road ahead remains long. It is necessary that all States participate in that work. We are pleased to be able to contribute concretely to its success thanks to the involvement our Permanent Representative in New York's as a co-facilitator of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Another topical challenge is the advent of digital technology, which is dramatically transforming the world. It represents a great opportunity, but also a cross-border challenge. Topics such as access to the Internet for all and the impact of digitization on sustainable development, as well as cybersecurity, should be addressed together. The twelfth Internet Governance Forum, which Switzerland will host in Geneva in December, will provide an opportunity to discuss those issues.

So as to maintain the capacity of the United Nations, we must also invest in the relevant processes — because the United Nations stands out as much by its areas of work as by its methods of work. Effective and modern management is needed to ensure the robustness of the United Nations system. Reforms in management are therefore essential.

In our interconnected world, dialogue is essential. Dialogue requires the time and involvement of all parties. It has to be conducted on a broad basis and involve all the relevant actors. For example, it appears that political dialogue among States is insufficient with regard to combating climate change. Extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, clearly show that the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must be implemented quickly. Scientists believe that if nothing is done, such

phenomena will become a new reality with which we will have to deal. The private sector, whose role in innovation, progress and development is essential, is involved, for example, in developing solutions, in consultation with the scientific community and the political sphere. Scientific diplomacy and exchanges with scientists allow us to make the right decisions. As policymakers, we must base our decisions on established facts.

Switzerland is firmly convinced of the importance of investing in a well-functioning multilateral system, particularly in an efficient United Nations. Confronted by current challenges, and in the interconnected world that is ours, the notion of "every man for himself" is not a feasible option.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Swiss Confederation for the statement she has just made.

*Ms. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

### Address by Mr. Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic

*Mr. Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Kiska**: First, allow me to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency. I am convinced that under your leadership the General Assembly will swiftly and successfully advance its work.

Every minute, as I speak, 12 children die of hunger, and more than 100 are born to extreme poverty. Dozens die from preventable diseases, which we have been able to cure for decades, and it is our responsibility — that of the people in this Hall — to do everything in our powers to help them.

The challenges that we face often do not require difficult strategies or unprecedented amounts of money. They require only our dedication and true leadership, which includes both sides: those who can help give up on ignorance and selfishness and those who receive the help to make the people their first priority.

I therefore want to commend you, Sir, for choosing such a sound focus for this year's session of the General Assembly, namely, on our people and striving for peace and a decent life for all in sustainable conditions. Indeed, there is no bigger responsibility of us as political leaders than to take care of the planet and serve its people. Building safe, healthy, prosperous and just societies for every individual is not a mere ambition. It is our duty. It is the reason that our people entrust us with the power to act on their behalf and to make use of the limited resources that our societies generate.

Our devotion to shared principles, virtuous ambition to keep promises and ability to deliver results are the three most vital components of all respectable public service, and there are no stronger enemies to the effort to make a real difference in the world than egoism, ignorance and narrow-minded national or personal interests. Respect for the principles of peace and security is essential to living in dignity for all our people. Those principles have been at the very core of the Organization since its establishment. The first and the most important responsibility for us as leaders and Members of the United Nations is to adhere to those principles and values, enforce them and punish those who violate them.

Yet far too many people are dying in senseless conflicts or suffering in displacement as a result of the violence. The enormous human tragedies, the material damage caused by armed conflicts, and the refugee crisis deplete much-needed resources that could otherwise go to social and economic development. The bloody reality of our times is a painful reminder of our ignorance and egoism.

Every year after this gathering, we all return to our homes. But there are more than 60 million people who have no such place — people who had to leave everything behind to save their lives and run away from poverty or the horrors of war. Those people do not ask too much. They just want to have a place to live, to raise children, to prosper with their loved ones. We need to make those people feel at home again.

The way we treat our own people is as important to international peace and security as the way we treat each other. Recent findings about the use of chemical weapons by the Al-Assad regime in Syria against his own citizens should alarm us all as much as the

atrocities in Raqqa, Mosul and many other places. All such horrors demonstrate how little respect is being paid to human lives and to the very principle of humanity, especially when power games are played. Our resolve to act when United Nations principles are at stake is often the last hope for those who desperately wait for our help, trapped in the middle of deadly violence in the ruins of what they used to call their homes.

We are witness to short-sighted interests built on spreading instability that are undermining collective efforts to secure peace and security. The very core of the Charter of the United Nations for securing peaceful coexistence among nations is crippled in the name of the selfish pursuits and egoism of the so-called spheres of influence — a fancy phrase too often misused to cover violations of the international order and justify disrespect for sovereignty. It is a dangerous game of tragic outcomes and unintended consequences. We in Europe can see it too: Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova all know the price of peace. They are all aware of the pain resulting from their sovereignty being undermined by an aggressive neighbour — a neighbour that thinks the rules do not apply to it.

We should therefore not be surprised when things get out of control and cause enormous and irreparable damage to people, to countries and to this planet. Today we face one of the worst threats to international peace and security in recent history: North Korea openly threatens our world with nuclear weapons. Such grave disrespect for human life cannot be tolerated. I strongly call on the North Korean regime to terminate its development of weapons of mass destruction and to return to the path of dialogue and building peace on the Korean peninsula.

We need collective resolve in the very spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. The Organization must be firm in its principles and stand for the purpose for which it was created. Some of us have a special responsibility to do so on a regional or international level. There is no room for geopolitical games or economic gains at the expense of our common security. Millions of human lives at stake.

We live in the most prosperous time in the history of humankind. We have all the tools and enough resources to help every human being on this planet live a life in dignity, free from fear or hunger. But there is one challenge that will test all the limits of our ability to lead, act together, adapt and reinvent our societies and the way we live our lives. We are beginning to see and feel the sinister consequences of our actions on the environment. Be it 100-year floods taking place with high frequency, hurricanes that strike harder than before, or devastating droughts that force people to abandon their homes, such disasters are not warnings of future climate change; they are powerful natural events are features of the new environment we live in now.

Last year's adoption of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was an unprecedented demonstration of collective will to address the challenges arising from the climate change our societies must face. It may be remembered as a unique effort of the present generation of humankind to mitigate the consequences of our impact on the environment. It may become our ultimate legacy: a chance for our children to adapt and live happily and safely again in the changed environment.

Our devotion to common principles, our virtue in keeping our promises and our ability to deliver results on this issue is more crucial than ever. No money or short-term economic interests could possibly compensate for the irreparable damage if we fail to act together and change our irresponsible behaviour. The price of such planetary ignorance will be much higher than any we have ever paid.

Slovakia understands the urgency for collective action. We pushed for the swift ratification of the Paris Agreement under our presidency of the European Union last year. I confirm today that we will implement all the national measures necessary to fulfil our obligations, because the Paris Agreement must be implemented in full.

The Organization has served us well for decades. It has faced tough challenges — it excelled in some, it may have failed in others, but it has been the best we have had, with countless successes and well-deserved global authority. There are many pressing issues in today's world that had not been foreseen when the United Nations was created. Who would have imagined that one of the most important topics on the United Nations agenda would be climate change? And yet we demonstrate that we can tackle such challenges. But it would be naive to think that just by applying the same old procedures we can achieve new results and address any new and unforeseen troubles. Just like any other organization, we need to adapt to changes. I strongly believe that we are capable of such adaptation. However, let me emphatically underline that, while we strive for

reform to be more efficient, the very core of the United Nations must be respected without exception.

In order to succeed, all of us will be required to be responsible leaders. We must give up on national egoism and ignorance. We must stand true to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and be honest with each other by keeping the promises that we make and delivering results, both in words and in deeds. That is because there is no more noble task for us than to serve our people and strive to allow them to live in peace, dignity and prosperity.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Slovak Republic for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Andrej Kiska, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

## Address by Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

*Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Buhari**: On behalf of my country, Nigeria, I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election, as well as Mr. Guterres on his first General Assembly session as Secretary-General. I want to assure both men of my country's solidarity and cooperation. Indeed, they will need the cooperation of all Member States, since we are meeting during extraordinarily troubled and dangerous times. Let me also thank former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his service to the United Nations and to wish him a peaceful retirement.

We have witnessed many far-reaching developments over the past year. Some of the most significant events in that period include the Iran nuclear deal, the Paris Climate Agreement and the North Korean nuclear crisis, which is of grave concern.

I must also commend the role played by the United Nations in helping with the settlement of thousands of innocent civilians who have been caught up in conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. In particular, we must collectively thank the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the commendable leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel, as well as the Governments of Italy, Greece and Turkey, for assisting hundreds of thousands of refugees.

In an exemplary show of solidarity, the international community came together within my own region to assist the countries and communities in the Sahel and the Lake Chad regions to contain the threats posed by Al-Qaida and Boko Haram.

We thank the Security Council for visiting the countries of the Lake Chad basin in order to assess the security situation and humanitarian needs, as well as for pledging assistance to rebuild lives and livelihoods in the region. We in Nigeria are providing relief and humanitarian assistance to millions of internally displaced persons in camps and those afflicted by terrorism, drought, floods and other natural disasters.

Over the past year, the international community came together to focus on the need for gender equality, youth empowerment and social inclusion, as well as the promotion of education, creativity and innovation. The frontiers of good governance, democracy, including holding free and fair elections, and the enthronement of the rule of law are expanding everywhere, especially in Africa.

Our faith in democracy remains firm and unshaken. Our regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States, came together to uphold democratic principles in the Gambia, just as we had done previously in Côte d'Ivoire.

Through our individual national efforts, State institutions are being strengthened in order to promote accountability, combat corruption and recover assets. Those goals can be achieved only through the international community cooperating and providing critical assistance and material support. We shall also cooperate in addressing increasing transnational crime, such as forced labour, modern-day slavery, human trafficking and cybercrime.

Such cooperative efforts should be sustained. We must collectively devise strategies and mobilize the required responses in order to stop fleeing fighters of

the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham from mutating and infiltrating the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin, where there are insufficient resources and a weak response capacity. That will require strong cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the African Union, on conflict prevention and management. The United Nations should continue to take primary leadership in the maintenance of international peace and security by providing, in a predictable and sustainable manner, adequate funding and other enablers to regional initiatives and peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council.

New conflicts should not make us lose sight of ongoing, unresolved old conflicts. For example, several Security Council resolutions from 1967 on the Middle East crisis remain unimplemented. Meanwhile the suffering of the Palestinian people and the blockade of Gaza continue. Additionally, we are now confronted by the desperate human rights and humanitarian situation in Yemen and, most tragically, in Rakhine state in Myanmar. The crisis in Myanmar is very reminiscent of what happened in Bosnia in 1995 and in Rwanda in 1994.

The international community cannot remain silent and not condemn the horrendous suffering caused by what, from all indications, is a State-backed programme of brutal depopulation of the Rohingya-inhabited areas of Myanmar on the basis of ethnicity and religion. We fully endorse the call of the Secretary-General and the Government of Myanmar to order a halt to the ongoing ethnic cleansing and ensure the safe return of the displaced Rohingya to their homes in safety and dignity.

In all of those crises, the primary victims are the people, the most vulnerable of whom are women and children. That is why the theme of this session — "Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet" — is most apposite. While the international community grapples to resolve these conflicts, we must be mindful and focus on the widening inequalities within societies and the gap between the rich and the poor nations. Those inequalities and gaps are part of the underlying root causes of competition for resources, frustration and anger leading to spiralling instability.

The most pressing threat to international peace and security today is the accelerated nuclear weapons development programme of North Korea. Since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, we have never been as close to the threat of nuclear war as we are now. Nigeria proposes a strong United Nations delegation to urgently engage the North Korean leader. The delegation, led by the Security Council, should include members from all regions. The crisis on the Korean peninsula underscores the urgency for all Member States, guided by the spirit of ensuring a safer and more peaceful world, to ratify without delay the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which will be open for signature here tomorrow.

I end my remarks by reiterating Nigeria's abiding commitment to the foundational principles and goals of the United Nations. Since our admission as a Member State in 1960, we have always participated in all efforts to bring about global peace, security and development. Nigeria will continue to support the United Nations in all its efforts, including the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

### Address by Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Czech Republic.

*Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Zeman**: When I was a relatively young man, I was deeply influenced by two books. One of them was *The End of History and the Last Man*, by Francis Fukuyama, and the second was *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, by Samuel Huntington. Fukuyama's book was a description of a brave new world, a new utopia where every country has the same political system based on a liberal parliamentary democracy — a nice dream, but nothing more. As for Huntington, he was realistic and cynical. He simply predicted the gradual emergence of conflicts among various types of civilizations. By the

way, in one of his articles in *Foreign Affairs*, he also speaks about the bloody borders of Islam.

So, now we have a new type of civilization — I should call it anti-civilization — which has emerged over the past two or three decades. The typical feature of that civilization is the fact that it is based on terror and nothing more. We see those terrorist actions all over Europe and beyond. We convey our condolences, we express our solidarity with the victims of terrorist actions, we organize protests and demonstrations, but unfortunately we still hesitate to fight against that terrorist anti-civilization with our full power. I must admit that one year ago, I criticized the United Nations here (see A/71/PV.12) for its inability to define the word "terrorism".

The situation has changed. For 70 years, we have not been able to define the word "terrorism". On the other hand, I highly appreciate the action of the Secretary-General and the recent creation of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, which is a reasonable step towards a practical solution to the fight against world terrorism. The Assembly must know that there are 38 — I repeat, 38 — anti-terrorist organizations and institutions under the umbrella of the United Nations. Thirty-eight — good heavens! I believe that the more such institutions we create, the more terrorist movements are able to flourish. What we need is a single, strong office to fight terrorism, equipped with all the necessary measures, including military force, to fight terrorism and based on Article 47 of the Charter of the United Nations. I appreciate the nomination of Mr. Voronkov, whom I met yesterday. I am sure he will be able to solve the problems contributing to worldwide Islamic terrorism.

*Mr. Hilale (Morocco), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Let me address the other side of the coin — migration. Migration is partly provoked by terrorist actions, as seen in Syria and Iraq. On the other hand, migration is also connected with terrorism because some jihadists pose as migrants. In Europe and elsewhere, they create sleeper cells, encourage lone wolves and so on. I understand those who say that we must welcome migrants, but my opposition arises from the fact that massive migration from African and other countries represents a brain drain. The young, healthy people — mainly male — who leave their countries represent a weakening of the potential of those countries. Everybody who welcomes migrants in Europe agrees that the brain drain exists and that it contributes to the continuing backwardness of those countries. What we need to do is help such countries by providing electricity, hospitals, schools and water resources in order to stabilize the domestic population, but not to support migration.

In conclusion, I wish to say that the war against terrorism must be based on historical optimism and the belief that we shall overcome someday. In Barcelona, Spanish people said that they were not afraid, and Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed the need to live free from fear. That is why I should like to quote a sentence from Martin Luther that I believe most beautifully expresses historical optimism: "If I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree".

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Czech Republic for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*